

In an effort to address the misunderstandings, confusion and distrust which have developed and been expressed in recent days, this is damaging to the nation, the Congress, the Agency and the oversight process and, I believe, much of it has been unnecessary and can and needs to be overcome. The present strains have been growing more or less intermittently for something over a year, and in testimony before the HPSCI I addressed the strains:

"...which have been placed upon the relationship between the Agency and the Committee as the result of misgivings about the policy behind the activities that the Agency has been directed to carry out in Central America and the possible consequences of those activities."

At that time I said:

"We are more than anxious to work energetically and closely with you to clear up any misunderstandings, correct any deficiencies and limit actual and potential damage...It is to be expected that even an unprecedented number of briefings about a rapidly growing and changing operation of the magnitude which we have been charged with conducting in Central America would leave some misunderstandings and misperceptions behind. I am particularly concerned that these misunderstandings be laid on the table and, as far as possible, clarified and put to rest. At least we should examine how they developed and what was in the minds of those who presented information which may have led to misunderstanding."

That remained our attitude. We believe in oversight and have never sought to withhold or conceal information from the committees. We are sincere in our commitment to keep the oversight committees fully and currently informed and are taking steps to avoid inadvertant lapses and real or apparent inconsistencies.

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Records on past exchanges are being centralized; the chain of command for responding to Congressional needs is being strengthened. All employees are being reminded forcefully of moral as well as legal obligation to give Congress the information it needs to carry out its responsibilities effectively--to provide full and frank answers to questions and to address the important issues whether or not specific questions are asked. We are working with the SSCI staff to develop an agreement on procedures.

In addition to tightening our procedures and strengthening our ability to collaborate with the Committees in the future, it is important to clear up misunderstandings about the past. That there are many misperceptions is clear from some of the public statements that were made and some of the questions that have been put to us in writing. For example, we take questions

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